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Pollards Admit Spying; Others May Be Charged

4 Israelis Named as Unindicted Co-Conspirators; Investigation of Espionage Network Continuing

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WASHINGTON—In what federal prosecutors called "a continuing investigation" of Israeli espionage in the United States, a former Navy intelligence analyst and his wife pleaded guilty Wednesday to conspiracy charges based on the passing of top-secret U.S. intelligence documents to Israeli officials.

The prosecutors, giving the first official indication that the espionage network was more widespread than had been believed, said that others may be indicted in an investigation that has mushroomed into a stinging embarrassment to the Israeli government.

Pair Plea-Bargained

Navy civilian analyst Jonathan Jay Pollard and his wife, Anne Henderson-Pollard, entered their pleas in U.S. District Court here only hours after charges were formally brought against them. The guilty pleas were part of bargains in which the Pollards cooperated with prosecutors in exchange for recommendations of reduced sentences.

In the indictments, the Pollards were accused of conspiring with four Israeli officials—who were named as unindicted co-conspirators—"and with other persons known and unknown" in an organized spy scheme that was to have netted the couple at least \$345,000 over 10 years, much of it to be deposited by the Israelis in a secret Swiss bank account.

The well-organized operation included a Paris meeting between the Pollards and their Israeli "handlers," an extensive Mideast vacation that the Pollards took at Israeli expense and an Israeli passport given to Pollard under the name of "Danny Cohen," the name attached to his Swiss bank account.

The Pollards' attorney, Richard A. Hibey, said that his client spied for Israel "because he believes in the state of Israel." Pollard is "not anti-American," Hibey said. "He is a passionate anti-communist and anti-terrorist."

So valuable was Pollard's data, the documents state, that one of his Israeli contacts began "tasking" him to retrieve classified documents in which the Israelis took special interest. The information sought by the Israelis dealt with the defense capabilities of Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries, according to government sources, who asked not to be identified.

In addition, material that U.S. agents recovered from the Pollards included data on missiles systems designed or made by non-Communist nations "which might be available for sale to Iran."

In Jerusalem, the Israeli Foreign Ministry immediately denied that the pleas were evidence of broader Israeli espionage operations within the United States and reiterated statements that Israeli officials have cooperated fully with American investigators.

Israeli Stance Questioned

But U.S. Atty. Joseph E. diGenova, questioned repeatedly by reporters, refused to say explicitly that Israeli officials had given his staff full cooperation in its six-month investigation of the Pollard affair. Other sources complained that the Israelis' claim of complete openness, first made last Dec. 20 after a U.S. inquiry team visited Israel, was misleading, at best.

"It's like finding your wife has been fooling around behind your back," one government source familiar with the investigation said. "They (the Israelis) rely on us heavily and they shouldn't be doing this."

One of the four Israeli officials named as unindicted co-conspirators is Air Force Col. Aviem (Avi) Sella, who was a graduate student at New York University and has been named by one government source as a "case officer" for Israeli espionage in the United States.

The three others are Joseph (Yossi) Yagur, a science consul in

the Israeli consulate in New York; Irit Erb, an Israeli Embassy secretary in Washington, and Rafael (Rafi) Eitan, a long-time Israeli intelligence expert who is said to head a secret government bureau that oversaw United States intelligence operations.

However, the indictment and other court documents cite as possible Pollard contacts another unnamed Israeli diplomat in Washington, a second Israeli known only as Uzi and an unidentified American who arranged a meeting between Pollard and Sella in which Pollard apparently was recruited to the Israelis' service.

Government sources said that the four Israelis, the American and others remain targets for possible later indictment. Although the United States and Israel have an extradition treaty, a Justice Department spokesman said that Israel does not send its nationals to the United States for trial.

Unanswered Issues

Any legal action taken against the American who served as a link between Pollard and Sella will depend on what the American knew of Israeli espionage when he introduced the two and the extent to which he cooperates with U.S. authorities, one source said.

The plea bargains filed Wednesday do not answer two key questions: whether other Americans were involved in actual espionage for the Israeli government and whether high-ranking Israeli government officials had knowledge of the network.

An official involved in the case indicated that no other Americans are known to be working for the Israelis within the U.S. government. However, he added: "I don't think it begins and ends with these folks" named as defendants or unindicted co-conspirators.

"It was a sophisticated espionage operation that involved Israeli government funding," he said. "Israeli bureaucrats and their government benefited. Somebody had to know where that money was going and what was coming in."

Court documents confirm that the Pollards conducted a long and richly detailed espionage relationship with Israeli officials, dating at least to June, 1984, about 17 months before the couple's arrest.

Only a few months earlier, an unnamed American had indicated to Pollard that he knew a high-level officer in the Israeli Air Force—identified in the documents as Sella—who was a graduate student at New York University. Pollard asked to be introduced to Sella that June, the documents state, and volunteered during their first meeting to give the Israeli government U.S. military data.

Pollard Twice Promoted

That same month, Pollard was promoted from an intelligence research specialist with the Navy to watch officer with the Anti-Terrorist Alert Center, an office of the Naval Investigative Service. And, a few months later, in October, 1984, he was promoted to intelligence research specialist in the anti-terrorist bureau, where he had access to top-secret defense documents.

That summer, using a code based on the Hebrew alphabet, Pollard and Sella conversed at pay telephones around Washington and

finally met again, with other "unidentified individuals," at the suburban Maryland home of an unnamed Israeli diplomat. There, prosecutors contend, Pollard turned over the first of a stack of classified documents that officials say disclosed highly secret military data to the Israelis.

Thus began a tightly scheduled espionage compact between the Pollards and a series of Israeli handlers. After Sella returned to Israel from New York in September, 1984, the Pollards flew to Paris—and a first-class hotel—to meet with Sella, Eitan and Yagur, Pollard's new "case officer," according to court documents.

Given Diamond Ring

At that November, 1984, session, prosecutors say, the Israelis told Pollard that their government sought U.S. intelligence data to "identify and assess threats to Israel's security" and promised him \$1,500 a month for his spying services. The Pollards were given \$10,000 cash and a diamond-and-sapphire ring at the end of the meeting.

On returning to Washington, the prosecutors stated, Pollard met with Yagur and the man named Uzi at the Maryland diplomat's home, where he delivered a suitcase full of secret documents and was given a set of procedures and codes for his work.

Thereafter, roughly three times a week, Pollard took secret defense documents from his Naval Investigative Service office and transferred them to a briefcase in hidden locations "such as a car wash," prosecutors said. And he delivered

documents once every two weeks to the Washington apartment of Erb, an Israeli Embassy secretary, they said.

Pollard collected the documents—which held government classifications from "confidential" through "top secret" and "special compartmented information," a ranking reserved for especially sensitive information—from a range of military and intelligence agencies, using his own clearances.

They would be left with Erb on weekends for copying by her and "others whose identities are unknown to the grand jury," court documents stated, and returned to Pollard's office on the next Monday.

Prosecutors say that Pollard made "voluminous" deliveries of secret material, which was photographed and reproduced on sophisticated copying equipment in a separate apartment set up for that purpose.

The court documents state that Erb left the country on Nov. 20 and Yagur on Nov. 22, the day after Pollard's arrest.

Pollard, 31, was charged with conspiring to pass classified national security documents to a foreign power. The charges carry a maximum term of life in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

His wife, 28, pleaded guilty to conspiring to receive government property and being an accessory to possession of national security information, less serious crimes. She could receive up to 10 years in jail and fines of up to \$500,000.

Staff writer Michael Ross in Jerusalem contributed to this story.